



STAGHORN SUMAC

Rhus hirta (L.) Sudworth

Staghorn sumac is a shrub or small tree that grows throughout most of the state. It can grow to about 25 feet tall and about 8 inches in diameter, although it is usually smaller. Occurring mostly on disturbed sites such as road sides and old fields, staghorn sumac sprouts readily from the roots. It often forms thickets that have a characteristic domed-shaped appearance with the tallest stems in the center. Unlike the unrelated poison sumac, staghorn sumac is not poisonous to the touch.

The **bark** is grayish-brown and has numerous lenticels. The **leaves** are 16–24 inches long, alternate, pinnately compound with 11–31 opposite, serrate leaflets. The leaves turn a brilliant red in fall. The **flowers** form in early summer in large, compact, yellow panicles 2–8 inches long. The **fruit** ripens in August as a spire of showy, red, velvety berries that often remain into the



winter. The **twigs** are stout and very hairy. The winter **buds** are not covered by scales.

The **wood** has a greenish cast with dark grain. It is not used commercially except for small specialty items. Because the wood has a chambered pith which can be easily cleaned out, it was used for sap spiles (tubes for collecting sap in a sugarbush).

